

The HARD CASE of the STOCKINGMAKERS, Humbly submitted to the HOSIERS.

Drawn up by J. Gregory
YOUR Petitioners have for several years past laboured under greater Hardships than any other set of Manufacturers in the kingdom.

For while the Wages of all other Workmen, and even Day-Labourers, have been raised, ours have been lowered. We have been told indeed, that this was unavoidable : — however that might be, it cannot be denied, that our Rates were some time ago, reduced near Two-Pence in the Shilling.

About one Stockingmaker in four can get 9s a week by close Work; out of which they are obliged to deduct NINE-PENCE a Week Frame-rent ; NINE-PENCE a Week Seaming ; and THREE-PENCE a Week for Needles. In the Winter, Fire and Candle may be justly estimated at NINE-PENCE a Week more—so that the neat Earnings of one of the better hands, in the Summer season is 7 s 3 d — in the Winter 6 s 6 d. a Week. With this small Sum, they have House-rent or Lodgings to pay, and with the little remainder, have all the necessaries of life to furnish for themselves and their families, at a time when the coarsest Bread is near TWO-PENCE a Pound and Butcher's Meat in proportion.

Those who have credit enough to take Apprentices are but little mended in their situation. They must be at the trouble and expence of learning and maintaining them, two years before they can earn their Masters 6s a week out of which the above deductions must be made ; to say nothing of the time lost, in looking after and keeping such lads to close employ.

The price of Provisions (which for ten years past has been gradually increasing and is now above doubled) * they are sensible is the true cause that obliges them to make this disagreeable Complaint.

Had that cause been temporary ; had the probability of returning Seasons afforded them any reason to hope for Relief, they had struggled on with their Hardships, Grievous as they are, and saved to you the Trouble of this Meeting.

No Hope of that sort remaining, numbers daily falling on Parishs ; others ready by some Act of desperation, to involve themselves in greater difficulties, (if there can be any beyond what they now feel) they have at last come to the Resolution of submitting their Case to you Gentlemen, who only can give them Relief.

From the readiness you have shown to indulge them with this Meeting, they flatter themselves you will give the same Attention to them as they are informed has been given to their Brethren in like circumstances in the neighbouring Counties.

Should the price of Provisions become the subject of Public Enquiry, and by the wisdom of Parliament be reduced ; we shall cheerfully submit to a reduction in our Rates, as we did Ten Years ago, on the alledged decline of Trade.

Such an Application must proceed from you Gentlemen.—We are sensible of the impropriety of our interfering in matters of Government.

We shall patiently and quietly wait the Event of your determination, And remain

GENTLEMEN,

(With all Duty and Respect)

Your most humble Servants,

Leicester

The Stockingmakers.

July 3 1771

Added by W.L.

* That we may not be thought to assert at random ; we here give the weight of a Two-penny Loaf, of the coarsest sort, or Household, as set by the Justices Ten Years ago and at present, from the Assize of Bread printed by Authority in the LEICESTER-JOURNAL.

1761. Time of WAR.	lb	oz	dr	1771. Time of PEACE.	lb	oz	dr
June 13	2	8	8	June 15	1	4	4
20	2	8	8	22	1	4	4
27	2	8	8	29	1	3	14
July 4	2	8	8	July 6	1	3	14